

The Glasgow Keelie

September 92

THE GEMME'S

A BOGEY

Exclusive!

Who are the Regional Council trying to kid when they tell us that they routinely hand over a pension fund worth £2,496,000,000 to their 'advisors' and don't ask any questions?

Their minutes show ample evidence of plenty of consultation - after the public have been excluded of course - and the simple fact is that the council bosses are up to their necks in dirty deals.

Supposedly the Region reorganised the way their pension fund was managed in August '91, after the B.C.C.I. scandal. They are now told that their money is tied up into a nice "global venture capital strategy". What those words really mean is the rich bleeding dry poor people all over the world.

Since the council don't ask any questions about their investment managers, we in the Keelie have some information for them.

One of their main advisors, Scottish Amicable also advise Pergamon AGB plc, Maxwell Communications plc and Mirror Group Newspapers Ltd.

We would also like to suggest that Gray and Mullin who presided over this shambles do a Maxwell and go jump in the Clyde.

The people know that their real fight is now with the government and the state. The process of privatisation is nothing more than organised looting by the rich. Our politicians won't fight against this in anything other than

a token way. What they'd much rather do is rubber stamp the plans behind our backs and when the people protest they just tell us to hire a lawyer.

Vital aspects of our lives in Glasgow are under serious threat. It is a home to us but it is a Monopoly board for the State. Our water is being sold off, our parks concreted over, racism is institutionalised, the land polluted. Protest campaigns against all these things and more are spreading. Join them, get involved, make your protest public.



● Captain Bob: "I was advised to go into water too."

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What have we still got left that the Tories haven't taken away and given to big business?

But they're already well underway with poisoning the air we breathe, privatising the water we drink, taking over publicland and chopping down the trees. Even the Forestry Commission is to be privatised; and in England the Water Companies let polluters 'self-regulate' themselves.

As to food and a house, walk down any street in the centre of Glasgow and you'll find the old and young alike having to rummage through litter bins for scraps, begging and sleeping rough. Glasgow remains the homeless and sickness capital of Europe.

Privatising Scotland's water will mean disconnection for those who can't pay soaring bills. Businessleeches will suck private profit out of the water we use, at the same time dumping industrial by-products like fluoride into it.

Who knows what could happen to our water? Remember toxic waste has been dumped everywhere from Cambuslang to Cragneuk and from Airdrie to Clydebank.

The fight is on to maintain our most basic essentials of life. But who's going to take on the

What a sight it was to see Councillor James McQueenie being carted bodily from the Queen's Club into a taxi, under the influence.

And an even sadder sight to see the same worthy with a stoating hangover the following morning. Sitting as a

Certainly not the Labour party and the invisible men of their Scottish front bench. Their so-called 'tap tax' campaign is just a re-run of their 'Stop It' anti-poll tax verbiage: designed to stop the campaign not the Tory law.

The fact that Strathclyde and other Labour-council controlled pension funds have been invested in private English water companies, while Charlie Gray secretly consults private European Water companies says it all.

We will soon be in the hands of a privatised council itself with the Glasgow Development Agency's plans for a 'City Centre Management Initiative'.

No, just like with the poll tax, the fight will come from the people themselves, whose who can't pay or won't pay their massive water bills, and who'll fight disconnection and meter installation.

Punter power is on the move in Glasgow. First it was the anti-poll tax movement, then successful campaigns to save Glasgow Green and Bellahouston Park. Now hundreds of folk are turning out to save Kelvingrove Park, just as they did in Renfrew, Yoker and Scotstoun to stop a toxic waste incinerator being built.

More and more direct action is what we need, not empty words.

Justice of the Peace, he sentenced a poor soul to thirty days... for a drinks offence.

Water privatisation has come early to Rutherglen. At the restaurant of the Burnside Hotel, a dash of water in your whisky is classed as a 'mixer', and charged accordingly.

The issue is clear for a growing number of working class women & men. The only way to defeat the Tories & their allies in the Labour and Trade Unions on water privatisation is by massive public protest.

Mr Alan Stewart, Under Secretary of State for Scotland, may paint a glowing picture of the tremendous economic benefits that Scotland will accrue when the water mains start delivering Loch 'Latrine' down to Manchester; but is he not aware that Scotland was the only country in the world that discovered oil and finished up poorer.

When state industries are sold off to private investors, (not only are they deliberately undervalued (as far as assets like property & land are concerned) but all previous debts are wiped clean. When you look at the situation in Scotland with all the prime land owned by the Scottish Water Authorities, no wonder the speculators are queuing up.

In sharp contrast, those of us old enough to remember when the Railways and the Mines were nationalised, also saw their previous private owners demand and receive millions in 'compensation'. This money left those industries with a debt burden which they carried for as long as forty years, even when those very owners should have been sued for the lack of investment in machinery, rolling stock and safety equipment.

Will the Scottish Secretary of State, Ian Lang be shaking in his shoes because Shadow Secretary Tom Clarke is threatening to oppose water privatisation? The only time that the Labour Party defeated the Tories was in the week when they were getting prepared for their three months recess and they voted themselves an extra £13,000 on that year's expenses.

Britain, as one of the weaker capitalist countries within the global crisis of capitalism, can only boost its flagging economy by stealing public utilities and assets and turning them into private monopolies. All Major or Bush, in the U.S. can say to their cities is that if they are short of money and want aid, then they can sell off their public sector. This advocates for U.S. cities the same kind of 'structural adjustment' that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund impose on Third World countries. The only people who support water privatisation are the small elite who will run it as a monopoly: so much then for Thatcher and Major's big defence of market forces. We must remember that it is public control which is also being taken away from us here. We could delude ourselves that a costly legal battle could rectify some form of democracy, but we should take the fight against water privatisation into the back courts not the law courts.

At the International Drugs and Alcohol Conference held recently in Glasgow, one of the newsitems which was discussed in the backrooms was about Maggie Thatcher getting paid serious money to 'advise' a major tobacco company, and that the company chairman had publicly thanked her for the 'assistance' she had given while she was Prime Minister.

The Keelie's ears really pricked up when we heard about all the free drink that had been laid on (free bevvy in the City Chambers) and the protest by a significant number of delegates who handed back their freebie pens, keyrings and notepads etc. which had been donated by the Alcohol Industry.

Then it turned out that the whole conference had been made possible by the major funding donated by the drink companies. It was fronted by the Scottish Council on Alcohol, a charitable body, whose chairman is Lord Minto. The noble lord hit the headlines lately for trying to preserve a bit of Bournie Scotland by selling it to Japan! When the deal fell through he had it destroyed. He is also convener of Borders Regional Council so he can do what he likes.

The Scottish Council on Alcohol is backed by money from the Portman Group, among others. Portman equals Courage, Guinness, Allied Lyons, Bass, International Distillers, Vintners, Scottish and Newcastle Breweries, Seagram Distillers and Whitbread.

The industry, alarmed by recent trends, set up the Portman Group to act as public relations coordinator; education on alcohol was affecting their profits. It was also affecting government revenue.

There is plenty of well documented evidence that as levels of alcohol consumption rise so do health, social and economic problems; when consumption levels drop so does the incidence of trouble. It is the same for countries as it is for individuals. The World Health Organisation is suggesting that the Health For All programme should aim to have overall alcohol consumption reduced by 2.5%. This is bad news for Portman.

Group's masters who want to keep their profits up at society's expense.

They and their collaborators promote the line that problems caused by alcohol are down to an irresponsible minority of abusers, that this minority are genetically predisposed to this 'disease' of 'alcoholism' and that it's this minority who get "drunk" a bad name. This argument is not new, we've all heard it and maybe even believed it, but it does not stand up to scientific investigation.

Effectively the W.H.O. are saying that if the drinking population reduced their alcohol intake by 25% accidents associated with drink driving would be hugely reduced, domestic violence would dramatically reduce, admissions to casualty departments would significantly reduce, petty crime would be vastly reduced and this would be reflected in a reduced prison population, less fights in pubs, less fights outside pubs, less wife battering, less physical and sexual abuse of children, less alcohol related illness therefore more health service resources targeted elsewhere. If you don't believe that then investigate for yourself!

Be warned though! The Alcohol Industry is a major funder of research and are firm believers in the old saying that who pays the piper calls the tune, bugger the truth if it will affect profits.

The Scottish Council on Alcohol relies on volunteers to get the work done. Work that needs doing. It's directors get good wages. The International Conference earned lots of lolly.

We are sure it will be put to good use but to whom are they accountable? The Scottish Office? The Portman Group? Or maybe it's Strathclyde Social Work Department, whose director "Professor" Fred Edwards has been scurrying round the addiction centres querying their cost effectiveness.

By the way Fred, is Willie Blaney really dead and where did all the money go?

Why should the Scottish Council on Alcohol compromise its independence by taking money from the "Industry"? It's like Calton Athletic getting funds from Columbian Drug barons!

Enemy of the people

Why did Ian Lang pick the Merchant Bankers Quayle Munro to prepare an 'objective study' on water privatisation? Who are they?

They are the financial managers of five companies one of which is particularly interesting. It is Shanks & McEwan's plc whose line of business makes them top contenders to benefit from the water rip off. Their executive director is Hugh Runciman also a director of British Steel (or should that be Steal?), the Scottish Eastern Investment Trust (who plan to invest in Eastern Europe with the money they said wasn't there to invest in Scotland) and he is also a director of the National Trust (those guardians against pollution except when it costs big business any money).

Other directors include James Boyd of the Bank of Scotland, Scottish Widows and the British Linen Bank (who are handling the Scottish Power shares sell-off) and Anthony Alexander who is also a director of Hanson plc, one of the richest companies in the U.K. (other Hanson directors include the head of British Nuclear Fuels and Kenneth Baker, a main architect of the poll-tax) and there is one other director, Mr David Munro of Quayle Munro itself.

These are the people who will decide on the future of Scotland's water. They will make sure that the real process of privatisation will create a

monopoly for the rich. This is exactly what happened with Scottish Power; two of its directors, Nicolas Knessberg and Colin Black are also directors of the two top companies in Scotland, Standard Life (£2,212.1 million profit last year) and Scottish Widows (£1,014.8 million profit).

Just how much do these guys want? The answer is everything, they want complete control. That great cornerstone of Tory ideology 'competition' goes out the window with the whole idea of monopoly. That, if you remember, was the big idea behind dismantling nationalisation of industry. If you look at the other business interests of the directors of Scottish Widows and Standard Life you find that they are practically all directors of supposedly competing banks. The cross-overs and insider deals are particularly obvious when you look at the boards of Investment Trusts.

Take Murray International Trust for example. Its directors are George Younger (of the Royal Bank of Scotland and Scottish Equitable), William Coats (Clydesdale Bank), Alexander Stephen (Scottish Widows) and Ray Johnstone (Scottish Amicable, Glasgow Cultural Enterprises and forty other companies, seventeen of them other 'Murray' companies).

They all sit round a table, pool their resources and put the fix in. The 17 other Murray companies all have slightly different variations of 'competing' company directors and they all operate out of the same address, 7 West Nile Street.

The salaries given to top company directors are so notoriously high because part of their pay (about 70%) is linked to the performance of company shares. The Banks, Insurance Companies and Investment Trusts with their access to pension funds take

these and tie them into their companies own performance. Those who hand over pension funds to be 'managed' know this only too well and are in on the game: they would have to be crazy not to enquire into what the pension funds were invested in since Robert Maxwell and sons got caught.

Strathclyde Regional Council's pension fund has a commercial market value of £2.4 Billion and makes a million a year. When it came to light that the Region's fund was invested in water companies in England the council informed us that they didn't know. It is inconceivable that even the idiots in the Council could hand over billions to someone and not ask what they were going to do with it. It is doubly inconceivable considering that the Pension fund is managed by Murray Johnstone & Scottish Amicable both of which are run by Ray Johnstone, who has worked hand-in-hand with both Councils through Glasgow Cultural Enterprises who run the Concert Hall.

What else are the Council

hiding? They are hiding the tight little network behind the whole 1990 scam. Murray Johnstone also 'manage' Allied Lyons, Havelock Europa (run by Sir Lewis Robertson who also runs Stakis and Lilley) and Meyer International (run by the CBI's Sir Peter Thompson). The CBI in their conference in Glasgow in 1990 claimed to be the masterminds behind spending on culture going into the coffers of businesses they ran or represented. All of these companies mentioned were the chief beneficiaries of the Council spending spree of 1990, as their accounts show.

It is exactly what these companies want when a Regional Council simply hands over huge sums of money and asks no questions. It is not just the Council's money which is controlled by right-wing business gangs looting Scotland, it is the Council themselves. Just as ex-MPs like Younger and Baker join Private companies, so do the councillors.

"Such a parcel o' rogues in a nation."

Damnable Statistics

Them

Top Director's pay compared with previous year

Director	Company	Pay (£)	% change
Cameron Mackintosh	Cameron Mackintosh	8,331,577	66
William Brown	Walsham Brothers	7,344,741	-10
Michael Morton	Britannia Hotels	4,030,362	98
Alexander Langsam	Britannia Hotels	4,027,988	98
Sir John Hall	Cameron Hall Developmnts.	2,348,795	-20
Steve Rubin	Robert Stephens	2,284,208	15

Us

Average Income (1992 prices)	1979	1981	1987	1988-89
'Bottom 20%'				
Pensioner couple	87	91	99	98
Single pensioner	87	92	95	92
Couple with children	101	90	98	100
Couple without children	125	127	118	129
Single with children	85	89	93	93
Single without children	109	107	107	107

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council**

**Thursday 24th Sept
George Square
from 12.30**